

FOOD TRUCK POLICY ADVISORY GROUP
MEETING SUMMARY
1/29/14

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. The Convener began with a brief summary of the consensus items reached by the Advisory Group (see issues chart for specifics), and then invited members of the audience to speak. A summary of the comments follows.

- Owns two businesses in the City. Is opposed to food trucks because they would skim the best customers. They do not pay taxes.
- Many restaurants do not open for lunch because there is not enough traffic. Food trucks should not be allowed in Old Town or Del Ray. Food trucks are a lunch business.
- Owns a food truck. All he wants is a fair chance. Has rented space on Hume Avenue but gave it up because of rent issues. Food trucks have some capacity to create jobs and pay municipal fees. The trucks are inspected and use commercial kitchens.
- Opposed to food trucks. There are 13 restaurants within 150 feet of his restaurant. Food trucks will reduce their customer base. They are unfair competition.
- Both his commercial kitchen and restaurant business are located in Alexandria. Also has a food truck. Has been in the restaurant business before, and hopes to own a brick and mortar place soon. Food truck vendors report every sale and pay taxes. He also pays property taxes in Alexandria. Food trucks cannot sell alcohol and compete with restaurants.
- Is a Del Ray resident and their restaurants are half empty. We don't need food trucks.
- Agree that food trucks may be good for captive market events. Not trying to stop anyone from starting a business. Special events are money makers for local restaurants. Should not allow food trucks at different price points. Delivery trucks get tickets, so why shouldn't food trucks.
- Food trucks are ok for private homes and sporting events. We have parking issues now, and Alexandria is a small community. Not going to say that I do not want food trucks. Demand is the issue. Restaurants are subjected to multiple layers of regulation. I have an SUP which dictates how I can operate. I cannot have a propane patio heater. Health Inspectors are over extended already. Food trucks cannot be supported in Old Town, Del Ray, and Carlyle.

- There are other areas in Alexandria besides Old Town, Del Ray and Carlyle. The West End Business Association Board supports food trucks in the West End.
- Owns a food truck and sells egg rolls with unique fillings. Born and raised in Alexandria. Also works at an Old Town restaurant. Old Town is not hip and may need to be spruced up – maybe allow food trucks at BRAC, Union Street, and Metro stations. Would like to sell in her hometown. Vends in Arlington, Rosslyn, Ballston, Crystal City, and at Arlington Courthouse. Old Town is old.
- Owns a restaurant within three blocks of the Metro. This is about how much competition can you have in one spot. Has laid off three people. The government shutdown and sequester has taken a toll. Where there is a demand, go for it (e.g. West End). The Advisory Group needs to really think about where the appropriate locations should be for food trucks.
- What we have is new land. You are adding new competition. We need a level playing field (pays \$7,000 in each tax category and expects food truck vendors to do the same). If you have food trucks, there should be rent or bids that are sold, SUP, off street parking requirements, litter control – all of the requirements brick and mortars have.
- There is a pattern of negligence in the City. Look at all of the restaurants at night. We do not have the supply for the existing restaurants. Many restaurants are not open at night. The Food Court on the waterfront should not be turned into a large restaurant. No problems with food trucks at special events.
- Is an employee on a food truck and hopes to own a truck one day. Restaurants and food trucks are not similar. Food trucks do their business at lunch. They are not the same kind of business, and they have different expenses. Food trucks revitalize areas.
- We are opposed to food trucks in Carlyle. We would support them for special events and summer concert series.
- My business is in competition with food trucks. Feels threatened because people will get off the train and go to the food trucks and not restaurants.
- Own a food truck and grew up in Alexandria. We are not crooks.
- Business is hard. Traffic corridors are not Old Town. We cannot stand competition during the lunch hour. Does not think that there is a level playing field. We need to be careful about where food trucks are located.
- King Street Gardens is in front of their restaurant. If food trucks are allowed, the last few parking spaces would be sucked up. They will hurt business. Where is the demonstrated need? Persons already sit in their outdoor seating with food from other places.

Alexandria is upscale. Private homes, yes; special events, no; at sporting events (what is the effect on booster clubs?).

- The Restaurant Association of D.C. does not oppose food trucks. You do need a level playing field. Bringing them into an area where there are numerous restaurants is a problem. A 10 percent loss for three months means closure for a restaurant.
- A level playing field is important and food trucks should not be allowed to take restaurant parking spaces.
- Where is the demand? Food trucks are just looking for more places to go.
- Food trucks hurt business. Her husband used to eat in restaurants because he does not like fast food. Now he eats at food trucks in Rosslyn. Again, food trucks are ok for special events in Old Town. The cost of operating a restaurant is high. If there is a dead zone, City did poor planning if there is no restaurant.
- It's a service to be inspected by the Health Department every three months, and that's good. It's a shame if that would fall off because of food trucks.
- Restaurant's move to King Street increased the cost of sandwich prices from \$5.00 to \$7.00. His restaurant cannot compete with the \$3.00 or \$4.00 sandwiches on food trucks. When food trucks came to Foggy Bottom, there was a 15 – 20 percent drop in business after they arrived.
- There is a need somewhere in Alexandria for food trucks. Opposed to food trucks in Old Town and Del Ray. There is a place where we can coexist, but we need more data. Don't rush.
- Restaurant industry is part of the revitalization of Old Town. Food truck revenue does not go into City coffers. His business was off 10 percent during First Night and the GW Parade. There are a myriad of taxes contributed by restaurants.
- Have restaurants in four locations in Alexandria. Pays \$7,000 - \$8,000 in rent for each store. Food trucks will not be equal for small businesses. If you want to compete, lease a vacant space.

The meeting was adjourned after a few general comments by members of the Food Truck Policy Advisory Group.

